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VIEWS

THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT
IN PUBLIC HEALTH.....by Aubrey T. Robinson

REVIEWS

HALF A CENTURY OF VICTIMS
a review of Eugene Lyons'
Workers' Paradise Lost.....by Joan Kennedy Taylor

JOAN KENNEDY TAYLOR, editor 50¢

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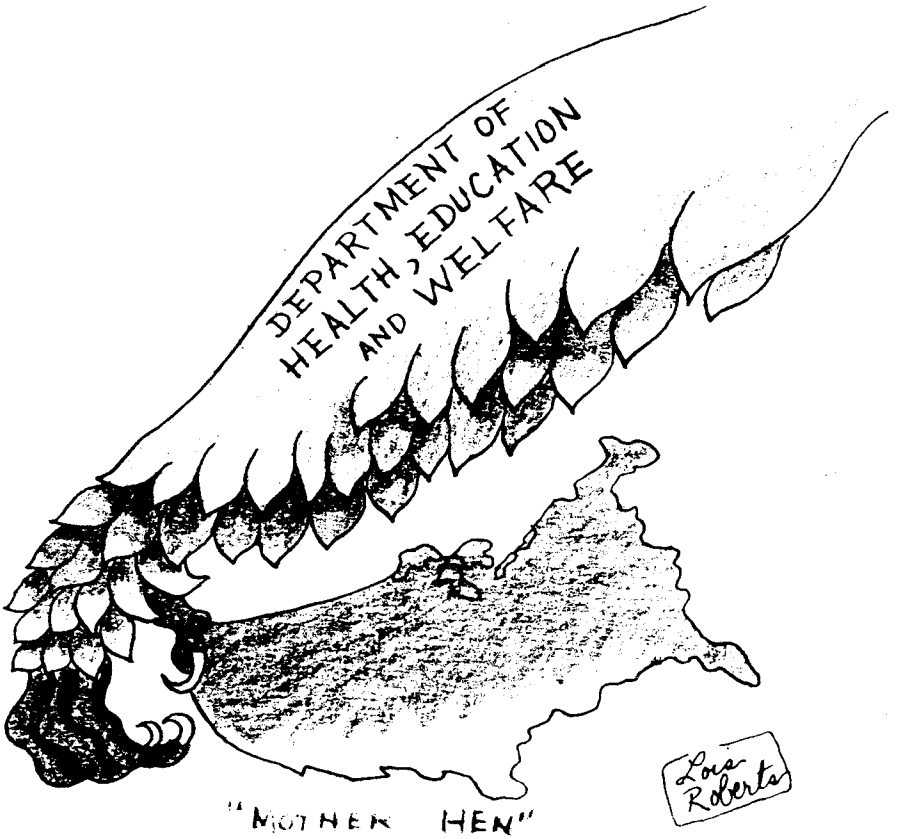
VIEWS



The Role of the Government in Public Health

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(Paris: 1832). On March 29th, the night of Mi-careme, a masked ball was in progress, the chahut in full swing. Suddenly, the gayest of the harlequins collapsed, cold in the limbs, and, underneath his mask, "violet-blue" in the face. Laughter died out, dancing ceased, and in a short while carriage-loads of people were hurried from the *redoute* to the Hotel Dieu to die and, to prevent a panic among the patients, were thrust into rude graves in their dominoes. Soon the public halls were filled with dead bodies, sewed in sacks for want of coffins. Long lines of hearses stood *en queue* outside Pere Lachaise. Everybody wore flannel bandages. The rich gathered up their belongings and fled the town. Over 120,000 passports were issued at the Hotel de Ville. A *guillotine ambulante* was stalking abroad, and its effect upon the excitable Parisians reduplicated the scenes of the Revolution or of the plague at Milan.[1]

If you had been present at such a scene, wouldn't you want to help? Mightn't your concern even amount to feelings that you should help? People have traditionally confused such feelings of moral obligation with the idea that a *legal* obligation must be involved--that people should be *forced* to help. Out of such reactions to similar episodes have grown the large government operations and controls in the field of public health. Such spectres from the past, of the evils overcome by governmental activity in this area, retain their psychological pull today. They help secure public support for future public health projects and, for the professional public health officer, they justify not simply his occupational existence, but any program in which he is engaged.

Although there is a legitimate basis for *someone*

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to engage in many health projects of a "public" nature, such as health research, contagious disease control and environmental sanitation, the lack of any precise definition of what the government's role should be in this area makes the present-day public health scene a mixture of legitimate, dubious and wrong activities.

No one has ever differentiated between public health as a potentially useful service and government activities of a public health nature. Most of the activities labeled "public health" form a distinct social service which can be properly performed by private businessmen, not a political or governmental area of responsibility. From the beginnings of civilization, activities such as garbage disposal (which includes sewage systems), supplying water in quantity for towns and cities, rodent control, and the cleaning and maintenance of city streets have been considered proper, almost fundamental areas of government operation and control. The rationale for this opinion was that no individual would undertake a project in which his own benefit was so small a part of the benefit to all--a rationale no longer even plausible in this day of mass markets and mass services.

To these social services has been added a mixture of strictly medical services (hospitals, clinics, and district nurses), some research and experimental work (testing new drugs and pesticides), and many welfare activities (free milk for babies, marriage counseling, and nutritional advice). Today, the public health field in America is becoming one gigantic, confused, loosely constituted institution, composed largely of government activities (with private organizations playing adjunctive and supporting roles), presided over by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare; all of which come indirectly under the influence of the World Health

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Organization (WHO) of the United Nations, whose medical research is 100% financed by United States tax dollars.

Basically, the question that must be answered is: What is the proper relationship of the government to the public health field? That is the primary concern of this article.

What is public health? There are many "definitions" put forward, almost all of which give one an *idea* of public health rather than an actual *definition*.

Almost all definitions in use today agree on two points: a) the group or community is the basic unit (or patient) to be treated, and b) this care or treatment is brought about through "organized community effort." In this respect, *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* is fairly concise: public health is the "Art and Science dealing with the protection and improvement of community health by organized community effort. . . ." Further, in an *Introduction to Public Health*,[2] it is called "that body of knowledge and those practices that contribute to health in the aggregate."

However, the definition still considered by public health professionals to be one of the most authoritative is by C.E.A. Winslow in an article entitled "The Untilled Field of Public Health," which appeared in *Modern Medicine* in March, 1920: "Public Health is the Science and Art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health and efficiency; through organized community effort; for the sanitation of the environment, control of communicable infections, education of the individual in personal hygiene, organization of medical and nursing services for the early diagnosis and preventive treatment of disease, and development of the social machinery to insure everyone a standard of living adequate for

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the maintenance of health, so organizing these benefits as to enable every citizen to realize his birthright of health and longevity."

It must be noted that the focus of all three definitions is on the group treating a group, which does not in fact happen. It is the individual nurse or public health officer who deals with an individual citizen, to educate him, to treat him, to quarantine him, or to send him to the hospital. If in fact it was the health of the group rather than of the individual that was important, then of course individual rights would not matter. You cut off a leg to save the person's life without reference to the leg's "rights"--it has no rights where the health of the whole is concerned. It is this attitude that the devotee of public health legislation would have us take toward the individual citizen when "group health" is at stake.

Also, notice that all three definitions have a lack of definite or precise meaning, which makes it possible to include any sphere of human activity. Hence, the so-called comprehensive approach (euphemism for *include everything*) in which one treats *every* aspect of the patient (social, economic, psychological). The result is Big Brother's dreams come true.

If public health professionals can't or won't specify the boundaries of their field, then perhaps an investigation of historical developments may at least indicate in what context we can formulate a more proper definition and area of responsibility.

Most ancient civilizations had no governmental medical services of any kind. Health research was practically nonexistent; contagious diseases were controlled by social ostracism and, in the case of

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epidemics, by governmentally enforced banishment or isolation. But sanitary services were instituted very early.

The Minoans and Cretan rulers from 5000 to 1800 B.C. had constructed public water systems, and their houses had water closets with flushing systems. The Egyptian Pharoahs (about 1000 B.C.) constructed public drainage systems through slave labor and also developed earth closets, in addition to numerous pharmaceutical preparations. The Jews are considered the first to have developed a formal hygienic code. Their Mosaic law set rules for such activities as disinfection, disposal of refuse, and maternity care.

The Greeks had little government social services of the sort we have been discussing. Their culture emphasized matters of personal cleanliness, exercise, and dietetics rather than environmental sanitation and public water systems. They did have some public baths and aqueducts, which were constructed by wealthy citizens on their own lands.

The Roman Empire developed extraordinary water and sewage systems and paved streets, many of which still exist today. It was the Romans who first formulated the concept of governmentally collected vital statistics, later to become an important adjunct to public health activities. At the height of the Roman Empire, laws existed for the registration of citizens and slaves and for periodic census-taking. The Romans also started government activities in related areas--supervision of weights and measures and of public bars and houses of prostitution, the destruction of unsound goods, and the regulation of building construction.

By the time of the fall of the Roman Empire, public drainage and flushing systems, public water supplies,

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methods of disinfection and refuse disposal, maternity care, environmental sanitation, regulation of merchant and industrial practices, census-taking, control of rodents, housing laws, and regulation of health hazards and care in industrial establishments had all been thought of in at least some civilization as practices instituted by the government on behalf of "the health of the public." The Middle Ages added control of epidemics through primitive government-enforced quarantine and isolation measures.

The Middle Ages in general were marked by mysticism and a "mortification of the flesh" that considered the earth and the body evil. This resulted in a pronounced unconcern on the part of the people with personal hygiene and sanitation. It was a time of plague and epidemic. Two of the most feared diseases of these times were leprosy and bubonic plague ("Black Death") which often reached pandemic proportions, wiping out two-thirds or one-half the population in each settlement or area. It has been said that "nothing before or since so nearly accomplished the extermination of the human race." "When Pope Clement VI asked for the number of the dead, some said that half of the population of the known world had died. . . . The total mortality from the Black Death is thought to have been over sixty millions. In Avignon where sixty thousand people died, the Pope found it necessary to consecrate the Rhone river in order that bodies might be thrown into it without delay, the churchyard no longer being able to hold them. Europe, particularly during 1348, was devastated."[3]

Leprosy apparently was a far more acute and disfiguring disease than presently observed in the Western world and, because of the terror to which it gave rise, laws were passed all over the conti-

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nent regulating the conduct and movement of those afflicted. In many places lepers were declared civilly dead and banished from human communities. They were compelled to wear identifying clothes, and to warn of their presence by means of a horn or bell. . . . [A]s a result, these victims died either from starvation, exposure or lack of treatment and care." By the sixteenth century, leprosy in Europe was practically nonexistent.[4]

As a result of these plagues, the first formal quarantine measure was instituted in this period. The government of Rogusa in 1377 forced infected or suspected ships or travelers to remain outside of port, free of disease for two months before being allowed to enter the city.[5]

Although the Renaissance was not dramatic for its innovations in public health work as such, the medical discoveries during this period founded modern medicine. All of the discoveries that constitute the basic medical knowledge on which public health practitioners build their professions were the result of the thinking and brilliant innovations of individual men like Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), whose sketches and drawings added to his other accomplishments a well-founded reputation as a physiologist; Ambroise Paré (1510-1590), still considered one of the greatest surgeons of any age; and Andreas Vesalius (1514-1564), probably the greatest anatomist of all time. These basic advances were all made possible because of the general spirit of inquiry and free thought that characterized this period.

The modern public health movement, and the modern concern with social legislation in general, developed in England and America; mainly in England. The precedent set by the Poor Laws in Elizabethan England served to allow extension of these same

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laws to include health-care services and facilities to mothers, children, the aged and infirm. It was the English who were to give the real impetus and sophistication to the public health movement, not only in this country but in much of the world.

In colonial America, the British government was generally concerned with gross insanitation and with preventing the entrance of exotic diseases. However, vital statistics were early considered essential to sound public health practice. In 1639, an act was passed by the Massachusetts colony ordering the registration of each birth and death and outlining the required administrative responsibilities and procedures.

In England, the first sanitary legislation was passed in 1837. Also, during the nineteenth century, because of the increasing concentration of people in cities, the previously existing poor health habits and insanitary conditions were emphasized. The legislation of this time included bills concerning factory management, child welfare, care of the aged and infirm, mental illness, and education, along with other social reforms. Under the guise of protecting children, the power of the government was systematically increased in such areas as factory regulation and inspection, and the prohibition of health hazards.

It is important to note that much of the government monopolization of public health reforms could not have been accomplished without the demands, urgings, and active support from professionals in every occupational field, from medicine to law to social work. There is a long line of men in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who championed various public health laws, projects and programs.

In this country, Lemuel Shattuck (1793-1859) pub-

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lished his now-famous *Report of the Massachusetts Sanitary Commission,* which included a census of health, housing and sanitation in Boston in 1845. Although this and other such documents were concerned mainly with those health problems that were most obviously the result of human beings living in close proximity, they served to focus public interest and attention on problems of sanitation and preventive medicine.

In England, three men were particularly influential. Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), student of law and utilitarian philosopher, enlisted the doctrine "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" in support of his contention that public health legislation was needed and that the government must do much more in this area. He has been called the father of modern preventive medicine.[6]

Thomas Southwood Smith (1788-1861), London physician, wrote a treatise on *The Use of the Dead to the Living,* which led to the passing of the Anatomy Act (permitting the dissection of cadavers in medical schools) in England in 1832.

Sir Edwin Chadwick (1800-1890), lawyer, furthering Bentham's philosophy through what he called "the sanitary idea," persuaded the British government to appoint a Sanitary Commission in 1839. This led to the establishment of the General Board of Health in 1848.

All these men contributed significantly to a philosophical climate in which intellectuals demanded that the government provide health and welfare services for all. There can be no true understanding of the public health movement without understanding the philosophy of "social betterment" which has determined the extent and manner of the development of this field. The following quote eloquently sum-

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marizes this point of view:

> --As health is an essential factor in human welfare, its maintenance and protection are necessarily of social importance.
>
> --Under a system where individualism obtains, society tends to take only those public health measures which are beyond the scope of individual action: organization for the prevention and control of epidemics, the provision of public water supplies, sewer systems, milk sanitation, research, hospital facilities, etc.
>
> --Since, for generations, the social philosophy in the United States was largely one of individualism, quite naturally health problems have been left to the individual, public health work assuming responsibility only for those measures which the citizen, alone, could not institute.
>
> --Within recent years, society has shown a tendency to assume an increasing responsibility for the individual *as an individual*, for his education, his employment, his general welfare. (Italics mine)
>
> --Out of this evolution there has come a tendency to broaden and intensify public health work; and in this expansion government, representing society, appears more and more inclined to regard provision of adequate public health and medical care as society's responsibility to each individual if he cannot himself procure such service.[7]

It is imperative to remember that public health ac-

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tivities have traditionally been regarded primarily as government responsibilities and only secondarily as a voluntary community activity. It was not, in the beginning, government that encroached upon private agencies taking public health responsibility; it was assumed to be a field for government prerogative. The government has mixed various unrelated health-control measures with voluntary community health activities into the field we now recognize as public health.

In the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century America, many private agencies did develop. Most hospitals and clinics have been built with private funds. The American Red Cross, although chartered by Congress and working in cooperation with government agencies, is supported by voluntary contributions and staffed by volunteer workers. Margaret Sanger's birth control movement and the National Tuberculosis Association are good examples of private agencies who have provided medical and health-educational services to millions.

But in the 1930's, the American government's public health measures began to expand under the New Deal administration. And then, but a sort of natural impetus peculiar to governments, the administration extended its control and influence through administrative fiat and legislation, under pressure from special interest groups, both governmental and private. The recent trend has been toward the continued incorporation of various social welfare schemes into one giant federal organization: the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (1953). This department (now of cabinet status) is so large and so complex that a library of books would be needed for a complete study of its bureaus and divisions potentially involved in *one* health area, such as maternal and child care. Once this consolidation of agencies was well started, the government then pro-

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ceeded to utilize social security funds (as it is now doing) for such programs as mental health, heart disease, and dental health.

In his paper, *The Impact of the Great Society on Public Health Practice,*[8] Edward S. Rogers, M.D., Professor of Public Health and Medical Administration at the University of California School of Public Health at Berkeley, quotes Secretary John Gardner, of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare: "The whole movement of events in recent years has been *not* toward the separation but toward the interweaving of the Department's various objectives. With the enactment of Medicare legislation, health and social security are inextricably linked. It is impossible to conceive of a modern welfare program without a strong educational component. Programs concerned with juvenile delinquency, mental retardation, and aging cut across the old categories. An adequate attack on poverty defies bureaucratic boundary lines."

For a graphic illustration of the relationships that exist between private medicine and the forces for social medicine, the following quote from the same article is unequaled. Professor Rogers states: "Between the time of the passage of the Medicare Act . . . the subsequent passage of the heart disease, cancer and stroke legislation (DeBakey Program) in the same year, a total change in the relations between the Federal government and the AMA occurred. . . . The AMA suddenly changed its course in favor of working constructively in support of the bill. . . . The government welcomed this cooperative approach--*and the lion and the lamb lay down together.* This was a significant event because these two great forces for better health services had too long been at odds with each other. In the philosophy of creative federal-

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ism, the government needed the AMA. In the philosophy of pragmatism, the AMA recognized the growing pressure of a public consensus." (Italics mine.) There are two questions left to ask: Which one is the lion and which is the lamb? and, what happens to the lamb?

We now have a general idea of the gradual development of the field presently called public health into the government's own preserve.

Intellectually, this was accomplished through lack of any context for defining proper governmental public health concerns; the failure to differentiate between public health as a field of private endeavor and government activities of a public health nature; and the philosophy of pragmatism which evades principles and focuses only on methods and concretes.

Politically, this was accomplished through the doctrine of "social betterment" and the concept of the "right to housing, jobs, health and other necessities of life"; and the large, tacit, assumed government responsibility for the general welfare, both of which bastardize and mock the legitimate concepts of rights and individualism.

Psychologically, it resulted in part from a distortion of the valid respect many people hold for medicine in general. Through handling and treating health problems, the health practitioner acquires familiarity and efficacy in dealing with situations of fundamental necessity to health and life: in a very special way he "knows what makes life tick." This inspires respect and a sense of awe for many people which, if extended, can indiscriminately envelop anything which is said to be medical. The result is a kind of charisma attached to the medical spokesman. This charisma sometimes prevents people from critically evaluating any public health project: if it will help the doctor it must be good. It is the government that is today cashing in on this charisma.

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What is wrong with government public health work? Apart from being an expense of millions of dollars to the unwitting taxpayers, apart from the inefficiencies of sprawling agencies rife with red tape and duplicate services, public agencies are forcing private competing agencies out of business, and public health laws are used to extend the tyranny of the bureaucrat over the citizen.

The question is: *How does one apply the standard of protection of individual rights to delimit government operations, responsibilities and authority in the field of public health?*

There are areas of responsibility now included in public health work that are validly governmental in nature. These must be explicitly defined and recategorized under a heading such as *Health Law.* This is so because the only justification for government involvement in any area of the citizen's life is the protection of rights (by which I mean life, liberty and property). This field of health law would be concerned exclusively with infringements of rights of a health nature. It would be applied through standard courts, never through administrative agencies, and would employ the legal weapons of search warrants, injunctions, contempt-of-court proceedings, arrest and trial--*never* regulation and regulatory inspection. The foregoing description obviously excludes the operation or control of any public health facility or organization by the government whose purpose is not exclusively the protection of rights.

Valid areas of government assumption of public health responsibility would therefore be areas in which the use of force or the threat of force is required in order to protect the legitimate rights of other citizens. Such areas would be, for example, the arrest and prosecution of persons specifically

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accused of polluting the air or water supply; the enforcement of laws against maintaining known health hazards to neighbors on one's property; the enforcement of laws against selling polluted or disease-carrying products; provision for institutions for the criminally insane; and some quarantine laws. Those areas (such as air pollution) which have been handled mainly in a regulatory manner to date would present special problems because of the scarcity of legal precedents. Although we don't know all the answers to these problems, the standard for drafting legislation would always be that the right to property does not give one the right to harm others. Such areas as emergency provisions for life-saving measures on the part of the police would not be affected, as these are not properly considered public health measures but protection against possible death from crime or criminal neglect. This does not basically change the nature of government activities as here stated.

Most of the present public health activities of the government would be considered illegitimate. The medical services now provided by public agencies would be provided by private agencies which would have no power to force treatment on the individual. Sewage disposal, the provision of water systems, and similar social services would be performed by privately owned companies. The control of health research, hospitals and clinics would, of course, be in private hands.

In this country medicine has been traditionally a free-enterprise operation, not a state service. Why did the medical profession acquiesce in the incorporation into the government colossus of so many areas that were theirs? In large part because present public health services are not thought of as being based on the use of force. Taxation is rarely recognized as a use of force, neither is

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ruinous government competition. In public health, more than in most areas of government activity, methods of operation are through persuasion, research studies, dissemination of health literature, grants-in-aid and consultation and evaluation services.

America is a curiosity in this respect; she specializes in the indirect rather than the direct use of force. Because she still has some respect for individual rights, here infringement of these rights necessarily takes a different form from that in countries in which there is little respect for this moral principle--which is most of the world. America is kinder, more considerate, less brutal; and, as a consequence, less obvious. How does the average nonpolitical professional refuse money for research projects, medical school construction and various other endeavors? Given his situation, he doesn't.

But the government interference that this average professional would recognize and reject in private practice can strangle the field he loves. It is time that he started to understand it.

--Aubrey Thornton Robinson

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REVIEWS

Half aCentury of Victims

Workers' Paradise Lost by Eugene Lyons
Funk & Wagnalls, New York, 1967

The Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia took place fifty years ago this November. Lest this fiftieth anniversary and its accompanying celebrations give some semblance of legitimacy to Soviet rule, Eugene Lyons has written this "balance sheet," dedicated to "The Peoples of Russia--the first and worst victims of communism." While publications such as *The New York Times*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, and *Look* magazine discuss "striking gains" in Soviet literacy or Soviet athletic prowess or Soviet women's clothes, Mr. Lyons reminds us that there is still a statute which prescribes the death penalty for an attempt to leave the country without permission, that "there has been an actual increase of interference in the private life of the ordinary citizen in the last dozen years," that the persecution of religion has been intensified since Stalin's death, and that although mass murders may no longer take place on a grand scale, no one responsible for them has ever been punished, and many mass killers still hold posts of great power. "Besides," Mr. Lyons says satirically, "to applaud a homicidal regime for having cut down the number of its murders does seem like carrying tolerance for evil to an irrational extreme."

Eugene Lyons was a United Press correspondent in Moscow in the twenties. Although he had been sym-

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pathetic to the Revolution when he was assigned to Russia, the conditions that he actually observed horrified him, and turned him into a lifelong foe of communism. His account of his six uears in Moscow, *Assignment in Utopia*, was published in 1937, at a time when many American intellectuals were openly admiring Stalin and hailing his regime as a success. In *Workers' Paradise Lost*, Mr. Lyons has updated his indictment of Soviet theory and practice, to summarize the entire fifty years' record. As he says, "The dictatorship itself, eager to establish the continuity of its reign from Lenin to date, does not rest its claims of 'miraculous success' on the post-Stalin or post-Khrushchev period, but on the entire half-century. The judgment of history, similarly, will be based on everything that has transpired in these fifty years."

Rather than present a straight historical account, most of *Workers' Paradise Lost* is devoted to an analysis of twenty-one "myths," each one of which he explodes with a wealth of contradicting detail from his own experience and observations, from the writings of other first-hand observers, both Russian and non-Russian, from American scholarly analyses of Soviet pronouncements and publications, and from official Soviet statistics.

He does a devastating job, and it is one that very much needed doing, for a contemporary audience is exposed most often to the apologetics of the daily press. One needs to be reminded that "At the time Hitler was burning books, an outrage that drew horrified protests from the civilized world, Stalin in effect was burning authors," that between forty and forty-five *million* deaths can be laid directly to the Soviet regime in Soviet Russia proper, "through civil war, famines, 'liquidation of the *kulaks*,' purge executions, the high mortality rate in concentration camps, and so on;" and that the famine

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of 1932 was planned by the regime, "in order to chastise and humble forty or fifty million citizens," by seizing the entire harvest, leaving the peasants to starve. "In the most stricken regions," reports Mr. Lyons, "cannibalism spread."

Details of this sort are so horrifying that the world has been tempted to turn away from them in disbelief, and few indeed are the writers who insist upon reminding us of the Soviet past compared to the writers who are the avengers of German concentration camps. But this book is more than just a recital of horrors. It is also a countering of the claims of the regime. "When measured by its costs in life suffering and moral depravity Soviet communism is demonstrably the most tragic failure on this scale in all history. This would be true even if it had succeeded in providing more material satisfactions than any other system," says Mr. Lyons, "but even on that elementary level it has not succeeded."

And so he discusses in detail: *The myth that Russia before the Revolution was an economic desert, The myth that the first Five-Year Plan was a triumphant success, The myth that communism is a rational short-cut to modern industrialization, The myth that centralized national planning is a magic formula for growth and prosperity, The myth that collectivized farming is the answer for hungry nations, The myth that communism provides abundance for the ordinary citizen, The myth that Soviet communism has fostered progress in science,* and *The myth that the Soviets have promoted the arts and culture.*

Are the Russian people better off than they were before 1917? No, says Mr. Lyons. Even granting its hardships, life under the old regime was freer. "Before 1917, open dissent from the official ideol-

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ogy was not only possible but fashionable; social ideas were being ardently explored; cultural interchange with the outside world was wide and unbroken; simple subsistence was taken for granted by the overwhelming mass of people, especially in the villages; a vigorous opposition press and opposition parties were in being; labor unions were active and gaining strength; the frontiers were comparatively open for Russians to leave and foreigners to enter." Russian industrial product doubled in the nine years before World War I, "the peasants were not only feeding the nation but providing huge surpluses for export," and it was estimated by the French economist, Edmond Thery, writing in 1914, that "if Russia maintained the percentual growth it had established, it would surely outstrip all other European nations by the middle of the century."

What are conditions like now? None of the above conditions hold true today. And there are many new problems. Housing has been a problem that has plagued the Soviet regime from its inception. Shoddy building and overcrowding result in a situation in which "the Kremlin does not deny that the ordinary wage-earner has a smaller area of housing than a convict in an enlightened Western prison system." Even in towns and villages, the most desirable living quarters are those built in prerevolutionary times. The agricultural mess is monumental. "Before the revolution, scratching the soil with primitive plows, they were able to feed their country and generate huge exports, Now, despite considerable mechanization, they do neither." Collectives falsify their records for fear of reprisals; it is estimated that 25% of the fertilizer distributed never reaches the fields but is dumped near the railroads; tractors and threshers are immobilized for lack of parts. Mr. Lyons quotes a *Newsweek* correspondent in 1966 as reporting that

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"rural Russia, which begins only a few miles outside Moscow, seems at first glance scarcely changed from the Russia Tolstoy wrote about," and describes in detail villages entirely cut off by mud during the spring rains. Although farmers are tied to the land "by the simple device of denying them a passport, without which one cannot live or work in industrial communities," young people are finding ways to circumvent the authorities and to desert the villages.

Both economically and politically, Mr. Lyons sees no doubt that the people of Russia would be better off today if there had been no Revolution. "Let's have the gist of the fifty Soviet years made clear:" he says. *"Never before have so many paid so much for so little."* (Italics his)

But how do the people react? Are they reconciled to the communist regime? Do they believe the propaganda that they are surrounded with--that communism is providing material blessings and security against Western aggression? The people hate the regime, as they have always hated it, answers Mr. Lyons. And he discusses as myths the ideas that the Revolution was supported by the masses, that Russia is now a "classless society," that the people love communism and fought for it in World War II, and that there is an evolution toward democracy.

From 1929 until the late 1930's, Stalin allowed tourists to visit the Soviety Union and many tourists came, mostly Americans. They went to where they were herded and exchanged a few words with what English-speaking Russians they met, and convinced themselves that the Russians loved their government. Lyons quotes the British author Malcolm Muggeridge, who was then a correspondent in Moscow, as writing that the tourists displayed towards their Soviet reception "an imbecile cred-

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ulity which an African witch-doctor would have found enviable." He himself says that the tourists "picnicked happily in the graveyards of a stricken nation." Resident foreigners could not be so duped. Lyons himself knew many Russian journalists who would sometimes speak unguardedly, he knew personally of the gangs of homeless children wandering the country, of the famines, of the thousands of people who were literally tortured by the secret police because they were suspected of concealing gold or jewelry. The regime has gained no legitimacy in the eyes of the people since those days, he says; it is still referred to in the third person: as "they."

Besides, he points out, the very existence of elaborate security systems and the definition in 1958 and 1961 of new political and economic crimes requiring the death penalty indicate that there is some resistance to the regime internally. He characterizes the entire fifty years of Soviet power as a war between the dictators and the people; a war which was at first a Civil War, and later an even bloodier political conflict. In this war, he says, the millions who have died of famine and in slave-labor camps are the casualties, the inhabitants of the prison camps and penal colonies are the prisoners-of-war, the special KGB (secret police) army, which even has its own air force, is the regime's shock troops, and the liquidations of classes, republics, and autonomous regimes are battles.

This is the case even though the tourists of 1960 saw what they were intended to see just as much as the tourists of 1929, and the journalists are still reporting that the people love their masters. Mr. Lyons estimates that at least one member of every family in Russia has been imprisoned. He recounts not only the stories of large-scale "slave revolts"

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in Siberian camps from 1952 to 1956, but bloody riots "at Temir-Tau in the Karaganda region in 1959; at Novocherkassk in the Rostov area in 1962; at Pskov in 1963." Does that sound like a people who would vote in communism if they had the chance, as was asserted in a major magazine recently?

The story of the war years is even more tragic. Mr. Lyons goes into great detail to substantiate the point that many Russians thought they might gain "freedom through defeat." So many soldiers surrendered immediately to the invading Germans that a law was passed designating all prisoners-of-war as deserters. Stalin invoked nationalist and Tsarist heroes for the first time, and exorted Russians to fight for their fatherland, *not* for communism. He went so far in some of his speeches that some people felt encouraged to hope that a real change of heart might be taking place, and the bad days might be ended. But it was the brutality of the invading Germans that led Russians to fight, and no love for the regime.

The rulers, on the other hand, have developed quite a bureaucracy during these fifty years. In his discussion of *The myth that Soviet Russia has become a "classless society,"* Mr. Lyons describes some of its privileges: "While ordinary mortals queue up for hours to obtain some of the everyday necessities, the new aristocrats shop at leisure in special stores stocked with the best the country produces and imported goods. While top officials and managers draw hundreds of rubles a month--plus an array of perquisites like chauffeured motorcars, choice apartments--millions on the nether levels struggle to survive on the legal minimum of 45 rubles a month. In factories and institutions the dining rooms are socially graded: first-rate for the important people, third-rate for the workers. Trains have three or four classes, according to ability to

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pay. The best hospitals are reserved for 'the best people.'"

This bureaucracy is not the Russian people, but it is *they* who love the regime and who give Westerners the impression that all is well within Russia's borders. Their prerogatives and their future depends on the continuing stability of the regime. "Karl Marx once wrote that 'the bureaucracy possesses the state as its private property." He was referring, of course, to the bourgeois state. But his words are far more descriptive of the Soviet Union, where the bureaucrats not only possess the state but have this private property protected by secret police, armies, censors, legions of indoctrinators. And the Soviet, unlike the bourgeois state, owns and disposes of everything."

If the privileges of the bureaucracy depend on some measure of stability at home, they also depend on unrest abroad. Three of Mr. Lyons myths concern imperialism, world peace, and that misunderstood slogan, "peaceful coexistence." In his opinion, "It is a measure of mankind's yearning for peace that millions at various times have fallen for the rawest Soviet trickery in its [peace's] name. It did not occur to them that a regime which killed millions of its own citizens, engaged in kidnapping people in foreign countries, tried to starve West Berlin into submission, trained and equipped thousands of terrorists for operations all over the world--that such a regime could hardly be opposed to war on principle." He sees no hope for the West in the prospect of a Sino-Soviet war, pointing out that the objective of such a war would be to install a more viable communist government in China--which would hardly be an objective with which the West would care to be associated. Quoting Soviet leaders from Lenin to the present day, Mr. Lyons shows that Soviet foreign policy has not changed, except for

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the addition of the threat of nuclear power. If noncommunist countries will surrender to communism without fighting, the communists don't want war. But this is not a desire for world peace. "What Moscow has opened," he says in this connection, "is a *road to surrender*. Astonishingly, it has been mistaken by a broad segment of world opinion, led by reputable statesmen and Kremlinologists, as a *road to peace*. They have read their own hopes into communist double-talk about peaceful transitions to socialism, and especially into the renewed and refurbished Stalinist slogan, more than forty years old, of 'peaceful coexistence.' It is a propaganda gambit that is in truth, as the communists themselves have endlessly told us, a rededication to conquest and victory under the new conditions of a 'balance of terror.' But wishful thinking usually finds what it seeks, in this case, evidence of mellowing' and 'fundamental transformation.'" (Italics his)

But, the reader may ask, what about the two pieces of evidence which are most generally taken to be signs of liberalization within the Soviet Union, and of a peaceful transition from communism to freedom--the economic reforms sometimes called "state capitalism," and the increasing public criticism of conditions on the part of the intelligentsia? Interestingly enough, Mr. Lyons takes both of these phenomena as striking evidence that the regime is breaking down. The economic reforms, which he refers to as "market socialism," must by the nature of the bureaucracy stop short of any fundamental criticism of planning or of state ownership. This means that the reforms cannot work. "Because of the compulsion to reconcile it with state monopoly, every reform has in it the seed of its own defeat." But the very fact that the regime is publicly considering deficiencies in the economic system, even though this means admitting that they have previously been lying to the

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world and to their own citizens, shows how unworkable the present economic system must really be. The systematic introduction of terror and even genocide in the Soviet Union, Mr. Lyons points out, was not only *during* the first Five-Year Plan but *to implement* the first Five-Year Plan: to force collectivization on the Russian people. Now the leaders are eating their deeds. Premier Alexei Kosygin is reported as saying in 1965 "that only 'the supreme criteria of economic activity--profit and profitability' could 'reflect the real level of work of an enterprise.' In the recent past men would have found themselves in Siberia for voicing such heresies." This speech was the signal for "reforms" of the sort which have been in effect in Yugoslavia for fifteen years, and which, Mr. Lyons points out, are far from successful there. Russian leaders are hoping not to have to carry reform too far. "The leadership will temporize, make piecemeal revisions, in the hope of muddling through with the help of Western trade--today its most urgent need--and the sorcery of 'cybernetization and computerization' to take over some of the planning burdens."

Some Westerners see the announcement of reforms as a sign that East and West are "converging." Mr. Lyons warns against this. "If the current economic tinkering in Soviet Russia presages a return to capitalism, the one certainty is that it will not come gradually and peacefully as the myth-makers think. The communist masters are so deeply entrenched that they could not, even if they wished to do so, relinquish their monopoly of power--and that includes domination of the economy. Should capitalism or some approximation of it be restored in the Soviet Union, it will not be through step-by-step evolution but through some type of military or popular revolution."

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The other so-called sign of liberalization within the Soviet Union is the increasing criticism of the regime heard from men of letters. It is well known that one of the major areas of Bolshevik concentration was the censorship of criticism and the promotion of propaganda. Tsarist Russia "had been a cornucopia of creative works" despite the restraints of an absolute monarchy; the Soviet Union has been a desert. "The propaganda claim that the Soviets have fostered intellectual and artistic progress is fantastic on the face of it. The country has produced no significant Soviet philosopher or inventor, lamentably few men in the arts comparable to those of the preceding half-century." There was persecution of the arts in varying degrees until the death of Stalin. Then, it is true, there was a "thaw"--fewer artists were arrested and executed, and many that had been were "rehabilitated"; which "incidentally, reminded the Soviet public of how many hundreds of gifted men and women--now officially declared innocent of any crime--had been destroyed." Today, writers do speak out for "humanist" values, and the people are responding; 14,000 people came to hear a Poet's Evening in a sports arena in Moscow, because the poets had criticized aspects of Soviet existence. "The new writers, and older ones emboldened by their example, dared write of love, justice, mercy, conscience, the soul, and other long outlawed themes--especially about truth. They dared complain of drab and regimented lives.... Socialist realism remains the only 'safe' doctrine. Those who speak out still risk loss of their livelihood and worse, particularly if they are on the lower rungs, without the shield of national and international fame....Even the limited permissiveness in culture continues to be anxiously policed by a hectoring, threatening state, and the trend at this time time is toward less not more freedom." In 1966, twenty Ukrainian writers were sent to labor camps--

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fifty more were arrested. The chief editor of *Pravda* was fired, and two writers, Sinyavsky and Daniel, who had published "unpublishable" novels and essays abroad under pseudonyms, were given seven- and five-year sentences at hard labor. A poet is quoted as saying to *The New York Times* correspondent that Sinyavsky and Daniel were lucky, "there were so many others about whom the world knows nothing--as little as people know of a rabbit eaten by the wolves in the forest."

The arts have not been liberated. "Yet many intellectuals venture far more than is strictly allowed, apparently gambling that the dictators will hesitate to make martyrs of them, or simply in a mood to take the medicine of punishment if they must. *Their new self-confidence is the most fateful element in the cultural equation.*" (Italics his) Since the conviction of Sinyavsky and Daniel, an illicit "white book" on the case has been circulated in Russia and published abroad, including a full reprint in *The New York Times*. There have been demonstrations against the arrest of writers; students demonstrated in Pushkin Square in Moscow; an illegal journal has been circulated; and a writer sent a letter to all the delegates to the Fourth Congress of Soviet Writers which met in June 1967, denouncing literary censorship and detailing his own police persecution. What is going on, Mr. Lyons sums up, *"is not, as supposed abroad, a change in the essential nature of the Soviet system, but a historic struggle between the intelligentsia and the rulers.* The deepest significance is not artistic but political." (Italics his)

Mr. Lyons' has thus painted a picture of a despotism whose leaders, although they have been willing to go to any lengths of inhumanity to impose their whims on the people, have not been able to make work. He describes this in more detail than I have been

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able to indicate here: The arrest, imprisonment and even execution of scientists who did not agree with the biological theories of Lysenko. The failure of Soviet education to indoctrinate love of the system and hatred of the West, despite textbooks containing passages like the following: "In the capitalist states even today scientists who do not believe in God are persecuted....They persecute and starve lecturers who teach the truth about the origin of the earth, of life and man. It often happens that scientific books are publicly burned." The erection of industrial complexes (with American help) which make the Soviet Union technically the second largest industrial nation in the world, although almost none of the technology originated in the Soviet Union--these stories and many others are well known, but are spelled out here.

What makes Mr. Lyons' book stand out among the many books on the Soviet Union are three things. His readable and impassioned literary style, which shows on every page his affection for the Russian people and his hatred for the regime; his total repudiation of socialist planning; and his speculations about the future.

It must be remembered that Mr. Lyons is a journalist, and it is no part of his intention to give a moral or an economic analysis of the fallacies of socialism. In the early chapters of the book he contents himself with showing that the Revolution did not live up to its own stated ideals--it was not Marxist ("The very idea of 'expropriating' an underdeveloped nation seemed to them both heretical and silly, like robbing an empty till." and it was not socialist in that socialists have always insisted that their aim is "democratic freedom." ("The Soviet system has been an albatross around their necks. Either they had to insist that it had nothing in common with their socialism--or renounce socialism. During and

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after the Stalin era, the socialist movements of the world have sought to dissociate themselves from the blood-stained Muscovite aberration of their faith.") But it becomes clear that in Mr. Lyons' opinion, the "blood-stained Muscovite aberration" is no accident. He shows us how terror was necessary to the installation of the first Five-Year Plan. And later he states unequivocally: "In theory, fully industrialized and technically advanced nations like England or the United States could undertake full socialization and retain basic political freedoms. That is the hope which sustains sincere socialists and communists in such countries. It has been said that only the most affluent capitalist nations could *afford* communism with its built-in economic fallacies and wastes. But in practice, as Czechoslovakia for one has demonstrated, political freedoms cannot survive under economic dictatorship." Those readers who might be tempted to quarrel on philosophical grounds with Mr. Lyons' implied split between theory and practice in the preceding passage would be well advised to remind themselves of how rare it is in this country for a journalist in as influential a position as Mr. Lyons now holds (Senior Editor of the *Reader's Digest*) to see the terrors of the Soviet Union in practice as a necessary outgrowth of its economic theories.

It is unusual enough for Mr. Lyons' book to be memorably written and to repudiate planning *in toto*. But what is even more unusual is that after he has presented us with a picture of evil so all-pervasive and so entrenched that it might lead some writers to despair of the future of the entire world, Mr. Lyons does not despair. Does he agree with those who hold "the wide belief that the mere staying power of a revolution proves it merits, establishes an irresistible wave of the future, and qualifies it to serve as a model for other nations"? He does not. Does he agree with *Look* magazine (October 3, 1967)

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that "implausible as it seems to us, most Soviet citizens think they have a good thing going for them. They feel safe. They don't worry about hunger or loneliness or calamity. Raised in a controlled environment, they are without objective measure, but by their own meager reckoning of what constitutes freedom, most of them now feel free"? He does not. What Mr. Lyons sees as a very real possibility in the near future is revolution.

In a fascinating discussion of a "Whither Russia" symposium which ran for over a year in the bimonthly journal *Problems of Communism*, Mr. Lyons show that leaing Sovietologists, although they do not predict revolution, are almost unanimously agreed that the Soviet regime is the victim of such decay that it "demands deep-reaching changes in doctrine, thinking and institutions, probably beyond the capacities of the rulers." He proceeds to display what he calls "the lessons of Hungary," a revolution which, he points out, *succeeded*, and was only crushed by the intervention of an outside army from Russia. To those who insist that a totalitarian regime is immune to revolt from within, because revolutionary organization and planning cannot persist undiscovered, he answers that the Hungarian and Polish uprisings in 1956 were largely spontaneous, and yet leadership quickly emerged from the ranks, and the original intelligentsia "was joined almost at once by the factory workers, the peasantry, the remnants of the middle class, the armed forces, and a large part of the ruling Communist Party itself." Any future Russian revolution, he predicts, will follow the same pattern; and just as the ruling party in Hungary collapsed within three days even though they were considered by all foreign observers to be firmly in power, so Mr. Lyons expects that revolution in the U.S.S.R. would be supported by mass rebellion on a scale which would be surprising to the rebels themselves. De Tocqueville pointed out, says Mr. Lyons,

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that the most dangerous moment for a regime is that moment when *some* reforms are instituted, and quotes him as saying, "The sufferings that are endured patiently, as being inevitable, become intolerable the moment it appears that there might be an escape. Reform then only serves to reveal more clearly what still remains oppressive and now all the more unbearable; the suffering, it is true, has been reduced, but one's sensitivity has become more acute."

The book ends with the identification of the stalemate which exists between the people and the regime. "At some point," Mr. Lyons says, "the Kremlin will be driven to act. Either it must carry reform far beyond the present half-measures, to the degree of diluting its political monopoly, or it must again resort to terror. In either case it will be putting its survival on the line in a life-or-death gamble."

This, then, is a eulogy for the millions of victims whom the communists have claimed. But it is more than that--it is an obituary for communism itself. If the West will stop "building bridges" of escape for the Soviet planners, Mr. Lyons' evidence is that it can only be a matter of time.

--Joan Kennedy Taylor

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